

Cases listed before the Master (Care and Protection)

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Lord Chief Justice's Guidance Notices and PHA updates the following guidance is issued to keep all Court Users safe.

Existing cases

All existing cases listed before the Master (Care and Protection) Office are adjourned until further notice.

All existing interim orders shall be renewed by Administrative Order until further Order.

Children's cases and Non Molestation Order cases shall be administratively reviewed by the Master on 1st June 2020. Patient's cases to include Enduring Power of Attorney shall be administratively reviewed by the Master on 2nd June 2020.

Parties are at liberty to submit an application by email to the Children's Office (RCJCHILDRENOFFICE@courtsni.gov.uk) or Patient's Office (OCP@courtsni.gov.uk) by way of a Form FCI1 judiciaryni.uk/sites/judiciary/files/media-files/FORM%20FCI1%20Family%20Business%20Continuity%20-%20ISSUED%2020.3.20.doc or in exceptional circumstances by E-Letter or email to request a Directions Order or other Order. If other parties are involved the person making the application must at the same time place the other parties on notice of their application.

New Cases

No new application should be filed until further notice unless urgent.

Critically Urgent Applications

If an application is **critically urgent** it must be certified by the applicant as critically urgent and clearly state the reasons why it is so urgent.

If a Summons for a Statutory Will is deemed to be critically urgent the applicant must file medical or other evidence to explain why the application is deemed to be so urgent.

Hearings

There shall be no Inter Party or Ex Parte Hearings in non -critically urgent cases until further notice. Court Orders in Children and Patient cases shall be made on an

administrative basis by the Master upon consideration of the papers filed to include Form FC11. If a Hearing is deemed by the Master to be necessary it shall be conducted by way of Video Link or Telephone Conference Facility in accordance with the Lord Chief Justice's Guidance Notices.

The Master's discretion

The Master will only grant Orders in circumstances where the Master is satisfied that it is the right thing to do and is in the best interests of the Child or Patient. If the Master has any concerns whatsoever about prejudice and the fairness of the process the Master will adjourn the case.

Children's Office and Patient's Office

In light of the impact of COVID-19 upon staff resources contact with the Court Office by post, email or phone must only be made if critically urgent.

Master Wells

23rd March 2020